

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9217

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 9105

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XM, AR, CU, US

SUBJ: ARGENTINE VIEWS ON POSSIBLE CUBAN ATTENDANCE AT MFMM

REF: BA 9044

1. BASED ON CONVERSATIONS WITH VARIOUS OFFICERS OF FOREIGN MINISTRY, INCLUDING PULIT, EMBASSY BELIEVES FOLLOWING POINTS SUM UP ARGENTINE VIEW OF POSSIBLE CUBAN ATTENDANCE AT MFMM: A) ARGENTINES NOT PARTICULARLY CONCERNED AT THIS POINT ABOUT NONATTENDANCE OF CHILE, URUGUAY AND PARAGUAY. THEY REASON THAT LATTER WILL NOT WISH TO ISOLATE THEMSELVES AND THAT, IN ANY EVENT, ALL THREE WILL PROBABLY AGREE TO SIT DOWN AT SAME TABLE WITH CUBANS IF US ALSO AGREES TO DO SO. B) ARGENTINES STILL HOLD TO VIEW THAT MFMM WILL NOT BE FULLY SUCCESSFUL WITHOUT CUBAN ATTENDANCE. MOST ARGENTINES STILL EXPECT CUBA TO BE PRESENT. VIGNES IS IDENTIFIED PERSONALLY WITH EFFORT TO RE-INTEGRATE CUBA AND IF LATTER IS ABSENT IN MARCH THERE MAY BE, AS PULIT HAS SUGGESTED (SEE REF) SOME POLITICAL COST TO VIGNES. PROVIDED HE HANDLES IT CAREFULLY, THE COST IS NOT LIKELY TO BE EXCESSIVE. INCREASINGLY CONSERVATIVE HUE OF GOVERNMENT WITHIN WHICH HE MUST FUNCTION WOULD RENDER IT COMPARATIVELY EASY TO REVERSE COURSE AND NOT INVITE CUBA, ESPECIALLY IF NONINVITATION COULD BE PEGGED TO ASSESSMENT THAT CUBANS WOULD PLAY A DISRUPTIVE RATHER THAN CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE AT MFMM--AN ASSESSMENT WHICH MANY AROUND MRS. PERON ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT AT FACE VALUE ANYWAY. C) VIGNES MAIN FOCUS IS ON HOLDING SUCCESSFUL MEETING. AS HE SEES IT, THERE

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ARE THREE MAJOR INGREDIENTS: 1) THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER

ATTEND, 2) THAT THERE BE SOME CONCRETE RESULTS, AND 3) THAT CUBANS ATTEND. OF THE THREE, THE FIRST TWO ARE VIEWED AS INDISPENSABLE. THE THIRD COULD BE DISPENSED WITH IF NECESSARY BUT THE ARGENTINES HAVE NOT YET DECIDED AND MAY NOT DECIDE THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO DELETE CUBA FROM THE INVITATION LIST. THEY MAY CONCLUDE THAT WHAT RAUL ROA HAD TO SAY ABOUT PINOCHET IN LIMA MAY HAVE LITTLE TO DO WITH THE WAY CUBANS WOULD BEHAVE IN BUENOS AIRES. VIGNES IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE OVER WEEKEND, KEPT ALL OPTIONS OPEN.

2. VIGNES SEES CUBAN ISSUE AS MOST DIVISIVE ONE IN HEMISPHERE GROUPING TOWARD UNITY. FURTHER HE BELIEVES THAT SAVE FOR ITS ABILITY TO POSE AS SMALL NATION STANDING UP TO US PRESSURES, THE CUBAN EXPERIENCE HAS LOST ITS ATTRACTIVENESS. INDEED AS HIS CHIEF LA ADVISOR, PULIT, PUT IT TO EMBOFFS: "FOR CUBA'S GLOBAL PRETENSIONS, MAINTENANCE OF THE PRESENT OAS SANCTIONS MAY BE DESIRABLE. WITH THEM, CUBA CAN GET ATTENTION IN HEMISPHEREIC AND GLOBAL FORUMS. WITHOUT THEM, CUBA WULD HAVE TO SATISFY ITSELF WITH BEING A LARGE ISLAND IN THE CARIBBEAN WITH SOME GEOPOLITICAL INFLUENCE IN HAITI AND JAMAICA". HEREIN LIES THE HEART OF GOA LOGIC RE CUBAN INVITATION TO MARCH MFM--I.E. THEY BELIEVE THAT WITH CUBA PRESENT IN HEMISPHEREICA BODY, ISSUE WOULD LOSE DRAMA AND COULD BE DEFUSED. WITH CUBA PRESENT, LATIN AMERICANS WOULD HAVE TO MAKE STARK CHOICE BETWEEN ESSENTIALLY EMPTY CUBAN RHETORIC AND POSSIBILITY OF DISCUSSING WITH US ISSUES OF VITAL CONCERN. GOA CONVINCED THAT, IN THE EVENT, OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF LATIN AMERICANS WOULD CHOOSE LATTER. FOR ARGENTINA, PROBLEM REMAINS ONE OF FINDING MECHANISMS TO PULL OFF CUBAN ATTENDANCE IN MANNER WHICH PRODUCTIVE AND WHICH NOT EMBARRASSING TO US OR OTHER LATINS.

3. IN ASKING FOR VIEWS OF US, VIGNES NOT SIMPLY TRYING TO HAVE US GET HIM OFF HOOK WITH CHILE AND OTHER PROBLEM COUNTRIES, WHICH ARGENTINES DO NOT VIEW AS CENTRAL PROBLEM ANYWAY. ARGENTINES ASSUME US WOULD ATTEND MFM ALONG WITH CUBA IF THERE IS CONSENSUS AMONG OTHER COUNTRIES FOR INVITING LATTER. OBVIOUSLY, IT WOULD BE RELATIVELY EASIER TO GET OTHERS TO VOICE AGREEMENT IF ARGENTINES HAD SOME PRIOR POSITIVE READING FROM US. MAJOR GOA CONCERN AND FOCUS AT THIS TIME IS NOT CONSENSUS, WHICH THEY BELIEVE IS ACHIEVABLE PROVIDED OTHER CONFIDENTIAL

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CONDITIONS ARE RIGHT; RATHER IT IS CUBAN BEHAVIOUR AND INTENTIONS. IF VIGNES CONCLUDE THAT CUBANS WOULD BE DISRUPTIVE INFLUENCE TO SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE HE MUST HAVE, HE WILL NOT INVITE THEM. IF AFTER CONSULTING AND WEIGHING ALL EVIDENCE, HE DOES DECIDE TO INVITE THEM, HE WILL SEE IT AS RESPONSIBILITY OF HOST TO CONTROL THEM--AND IT IS A RESPONSIBILITY HE WILL TAKE SERIOUSLY.

4. IMPLICIT IN ALL THIS (AND IT IS A POINT WHICH CANNOT BE STRESSED SUFFICIENTLY) IS THE IMPORTANCE WHICH GOA ATTACHES TO US ROLE AT MFM, AND BY EXTENSION TO ENTIRE "NEW DIALOGUE". THIS REFLECTS BELIEF OF VIGNES AND OTHERS IN FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT THERE CAN BE NO HEMISPHEREIC POLICY WITHOUT THE ACTIVE COOPERATION OF THE US. FOR ARGENTINA, WHICH SINCE 1880 HAS TRADITIONALLY ATTEMPTED TO EXERT ITS LEADERSHIP PRECISELY BY OPPOSING US HEMISPHERIC POLICIES AND LEADERSHIP, THIS IS AN HISTORIC SHIFT.
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